Trans-Lake Washington Project EIS Methodology Report – 6/10/02

Recreation

For the purposes of this methodology report and the subsequent technical analysis, recreational facilities include existing and proposed parks, trails, playgrounds, public open spaces and green belts, and other recreational facilities such as golf courses, swimming pools, tennis and basketball courts, and ball fields.

Guiding Plans and Policies

- Washington State Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) guidelines and U.S. Department of the Interior (National Park Service) policies as they pertain to Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Funds Act.
- City of Seattle, Ordinance 118477.

Data Needs and Sources

- Current adopted parks and recreation plans of the following jurisdictions along the SR 520 corridor—Seattle, Medina, Hunts Point, Yarrow Point, Clyde Hill, Kirkland, Bellevue, Redmond, and King County. Often, these plans are a part of the larger comprehensive plans for these jurisdictions; the environmental team currently has copies of each jurisdiction's plans. These materials will be reviewed with the cities' parks and recreation departments to ensure that the most current information is being used in the analysis; it is assumed that updated information will be provided by the jurisdictions upon request.
- Facility-specific information, including maps, that show the location and precise boundaries of the facility, physical layout of uses and activities within the facility, and access points. Other facility-specific information would include the acreage of the site; the type and function of the facility; the level of use of the facility; unique features, characteristics, or value of the facility; plans for proposed new property acquisition and/or expansion or improvements to the existing facility; and funding sources for purchase of the site or development of the facilities. Some of this facility-specific information will be contained within the adopted parks and recreation plans (noted above). Other information will require follow-up discussions with the individual parks and recreation departments' staff. This facility-specific information will be collected for all potentially affected facilities within 500 feet of the footprint of the build alternatives.
- Base maps from the GIS system, which will overlay proposed project components for all build alternatives on an aerial photograph base. The base maps will illustrate the location of recreational facilities (to portray the physical relationship of the project and the recreational facilities), street patterns, and other significant landmarks.

- Some of the impacts of the proposed project on recreational facilities will be identified in other environmental analyses prepared for the Trans-Lake Washington Project, including transportation, noise and vibration, air quality, visual quality, and land use and economics. Information on those impacts on recreational facilities will be integrated into the recreation analysis.
- All information collected from others will be field-verified by a site reconnaissance of each facility.

Proposed Coordination with Agencies

The parks and recreation departments of those jurisdictions located along the SR 520 corridor will be contacted for information regarding potentially affected recreational facilities. Telephone contact or meetings with city staff will occur on an as-needed basis.

School districts may be contacted if school play fields that are available for public use during nonschool hours are affected. Coordination will take place with the IAC and the National Park Service (U.S. Department of the Interior) if any of the affected recreational facilities were developed with funds appropriated under Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Funds Act.

Proposed Coordination with Team, WSDOT, and Sound Transit

As noted above, some of the impacts of the proposed project on recreational facilities will be identified in other environmental discipline analyses. Close coordination will be required between the recreation team and those teams preparing the following analyses:

- Transportation – information will include any possible change in access to the recreational facility.
- Land Use and Economics – information will include possible land use changes in close proximity to the recreational facility.
- Noise and Vibration – information will include potential changes in noise levels within or near the recreational facility and whether the project-related levels exceed FHWA noise abatement criteria for parks.
- Air Quality – information will include potential degradation of air quality within or near the recreational facility.
- Visual Quality – information will include possible visual intrusion into or view blockage of the recreational facility.

The recreation team will work with each of these teams to ensure that the desired information will be collected, analyzed, and provided in a timely fashion.

Study Area

For the purposes of the recreation impact analysis, the study area will include all recreational facilities within 500 feet of the proposed alternatives. If other disciplines identify impacts that could impact recreational facilities outside the 500-foot recreation study area, those areas will be included in the recreation study area.

Affected Environment Methodology

The affected environment section will provide information collected on each recreational facility within the study area. The information to be presented will include:

- Name / type of facility / ownership
- Location (jurisdiction, relationship to alternatives)
- Access
- Size / layout of uses and existing and planned activities
- Level of use
- Unique features, characteristics, or value
- Funding source

The text will be supplemented with maps illustrating the physical relationship of the recreational facilities and the build alternatives.

Environmental Consequences Analysis Methodology

The environmental consequences analysis will assess potential direct, proximity, and construction effects of the proposed alternatives on recreational facilities. Impacts will be assessed through a review of the GIS, conversations with project design team members and relevant parks and recreation department staff, and site visits as necessary. For purposes of the recreation impact assessment, the following definitions and approaches will apply.

Direct Impacts

The primary direct impact on recreational facilities will be the use (physical taking) of all or a portion of property to accommodate additional right-of-way (this impact could be either actual acquisition of land or the granting of an easement for long-term use of the property). The actual number of square feet or acres of impact will be determined based on information provided by the project design team and presented for each individual facility.

Other types of direct impacts are related to increased levels of noise or air pollution, changed or reduced access, visual intrusion, or changes in the nature of surrounding land uses that could affect the continued availability, integrity, usage, or value of the recreational facility, and could degrade the overall recreational experience . As previously noted, most proximity impacts will be identified based on the findings of other environmental analyses and incorporated into the recreation impact analysis.

Construction Impacts

Short-term (temporary) construction-related impacts will be analyzed similarly to direct impacts. These impacts may include the creation of staging areas within or near recreational facilities, construction-related noise and air pollution, traffic detours that change access, visual clutter, etc. Impacts related to other disciplines will be based on the findings of other environmental analyses and incorporated into the recreation impact analysis.

Mitigation Measures Methodology

The mitigation discussion will identify measures to mitigate for identified unavoidable impacts. The recreation team will work with the project design team during development of

the alternatives to determine if avoidance of impacts is possible and, if not, whether those impacts can be minimized by means of design modification. This coordination will be critical for the Section 4(f) Evaluation to demonstrate that all possible means to avoid or minimize harm have been taken. Feasible and acceptable measures will be identified during consultations with:

- The project design team
- The cities and/or other entities that own/manage the affected facilities
- Other relevant environmental analysts (transportation, noise and vibration, air quality, land use and economics, and visual quality)

If Section 6(f) properties are impacted, coordination with the IAC and the National Parks Service (U.S. Department of Interior) will be required to identify replacement land of reasonably equivalent recreational value, location, and utility. If City of Seattle parkland is required to accommodate the project, coordination with the City Council will be required to agree on replacement land of equivalent or better size, value, location, and usefulness, in accordance with City of Seattle Ordinance 118477.

Bob Swope
CH2M HILL
425-453-5000
rswope@ch2m.com